



## Cytarabine (Cytosar<sup>®</sup>, ARA-C, Cytosine Arabinoside)

*At the Clinical Center referred to as ARA-C (AR-aC).*

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**How Given:** Intravenously (by vein) or subcutaneously (by injection into the tissue under the skin).

**Drug Action:** ARA-C blocks a protein that cancer cells need to copy and repair DNA. DNA is the genetic material in cells used to make new cells.

**Side Effects:**

1. Bone marrow effects can include a temporary decrease in white blood cells, platelets, and red blood cells. These effects usually occur within 5 to 7 days after treatment.
2. Nausea and vomiting can begin within 4 hours after treatment and last up to several hours.
3. Lip, mouth, and throat sores can occur within 14 days after treatment.
4. Fever, muscle aches, bone pain, chest pain, rash, reddened eyes, and fatigue can occur within 6 to 12 hours after treatment.
5. Diarrhea can occur.

**Special Instructions:**

1. Do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products unless prescribed by your doctor.
2. Take antinausea medication as ordered.
3. Call your NIH doctor or nurse if you
  - are unable to drink for more than 1 day or unable to eat for more than 2 days after treatment

- have a temperature of 101.0 °F (38.3 °C) at any time, or have a temperature of at least 100.4 °F (38.0 °C) that lasts 1 hour or occurs two times within a 24-hour period
- have any unusual bleeding or bruising
- have diarrhea for more than 2 days



This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Living with Cancer Chemotherapy Series  
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National Institutes of Health, CC Nursing Department

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